

Sting Operation

If you saw the 1973 movie *The Sting*, you'll have a bit of an idea of what a sting operation is.

A sting is used by law enforcement officers to catch criminals in the act and to gather evidence.

A typical sting might involve an undercover cop posing as a partner in crime so they can gather evidence against the real criminal.

Sometimes they might plant a bait car to catch a car thief.

Other times they might pretend to be a drug user looking for drugs so they can catch the drug pusher.

Another example is where a police officer uses the internet to pose as a child in order to catch child molesters.

You might be aware of all this, but what you may not be aware of is that the greatest sting operation in the history of the world took place about 2,000 years ago.

We're told about it in the Bible.

1 Cor 2:6-8 However, we speak wisdom among those who are mature, yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. (7) But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory, (8) which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

This gives us a bit of insight into the inside story of Jesus' death.

It tells us a little bit about how Satan was tricked; he had no idea what would happen as a result of the cross, otherwise he would not have been involved in Jesus' crucifixion.

How we do know that Satan was involved?

Luke 22:3-4 Then Satan entered Judas, surnamed Iscariot, who was numbered among the twelve. (4) So he went his way and conferred with the chief priests and captains, how he might betray Him to them.

Satan was very much working behind the scenes to ensure that Jesus would be betrayed and murdered.

So what was he thinking?

Why did Satan plan to have Jesus executed?

What was running through his mind?

Jesus told us a story that gives us a clue as to what was going on in Satan's head.

Luke 20:9-16 Then He began to tell the people this parable: "A certain man planted a vineyard, leased it to vinedressers, and went into a far country for a long time. (10) Now at vintage-time he sent a servant to the vinedressers, that they might give him some of the fruit of the vineyard. But the vinedressers beat him and sent him away empty-handed. (11) Again he sent another servant; and they beat him also, treated him shamefully, and sent him away empty-handed. (12) And again he sent a third; and they wounded him also and cast him out. (13) Then the owner of the vineyard said, 'What shall I do? I will send my beloved son. Probably they will respect him when they see him.' (14) But when the vinedressers saw him, they reasoned among themselves, saying, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him, that the inheritance may be ours.' (15) So they cast him out of the vineyard and killed him. Therefore what will the owner of the vineyard do to them? (16) He will come and destroy those vinedressers and give the vineyard to others."

Satan realised who Jesus was: The Son of the Living God, the true owner of this world and everything in it.

And he thought to himself, "If I can kill Him, everything will be mine."

But he didn't realise that he was playing right into God's hands.

He had no idea what was going on.

We are told that if He had, he would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

I'm sure that there was great rejoicing in the camp of Satan when the Son of God breathed His last.

Satan thought that he had won, that that was the end of Jesus.

Well, that thought only lasted a few days, till the resurrection.

And suddenly, the devil knew differently.

Jesus rose from the dead, and Satan would have realised that he hadn't outsmarted God after all.

God had outsmarted him.

Jesus had to die so that He could redeem us out of the kingdom of darkness and into God's Kingdom.

Jesus bought for us eternal life, through His blood shed for us, and through His body broken for us.

And that, folks, is what we call a sting; the greatest sting operation in the history of the world.